

Old Edgebrook District

PRELIMINARY SUMMARY OF INFORMATION

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OLD EDGEBROOK DISTRICT

Generally bounded by North Prescott Avenue, North Mandell Avenue, North Louise Avenue, and North Livermore Avenue, plus a portion of the immediately adjacent Forest Preserve.

Old Edgebrook is unique in Chicago. Well-concealed in groves of trees along the banks of the North Branch of the Chicago River, its leisured rural ambience is quintessentially suburban. Yet it is just within the city limits, making it an atypical neighborhood for a major metropolis. The community's roots go deep into Illinois history as the area was first inhabited by the Potawatomi Indians. Developed for residential living in 1894 by prominent Chicago businessman and noted alderman Arthur Dixon, it was planned principally as a railroad suburb. Its first citizens were executives and top echelon employees of the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad Company (commonly known as the Milwaukee Road), once one of the nation's premier rail systems. This collection of substantially built, finely fashioned older homes are classic illustrations of the various types and styles of domestic housing built extensively throughout American suburbs for middle- and upper-middle class Americans from the 1890s through the 1940s.

City living has traditionally produced the standardized row house/tenement and the palatial house/apartment. In juxtaposition is the house produced in the countryside, sometimes picturesque, sometimes merely practical. During the years 1890 to 1940, builders and architects creatively combined these two qualities and produced a new kind of dwelling. Alan Gowans, in his 1986 book *The Comfortable House: North American Suburban Architecture 1890-1930* explains the essential newness of the suburban house:

These were not city houses, because they were not wholly street oriented like the old row houses. They were not country houses either because they stood on smallish lots contiguous to many others. Their street facades were not identical to their neighbors', as in the older row houses. Furthermore, back and side facades retained something of the individuali-

ty of country houses even when houses were built right up to property lines. Neither city nor country houses, they represented a really new kind of dwelling, designed for a new, suburban kind of place.

The concept of the suburb itself was not new, having appeared as early as the 1840s and 1850s, but it reached its pinnacle of development at the turn-of-the-century and during the first three decades of the twentieth century. This was largely due to the revolution in transportation systems; first the train, then the horse trolley and electric streetcar, lastly the automobile made access to formerly remote areas easier. The way Americans lived was transformed. Millions could now enjoy the rural delights of suburban living while still taking advantage of urban employment opportunities. Old Edgebrook typifies this nationwide movement.

Old Edgebrook and Early History

The lovely natural setting and tranquil character of Old Edgebrook seems reminiscent of the area as it was in all probability found by the first French and English missionaries, traders, and explorers. Vestiges remain in its topography which are remarkably akin to those initial impressions found recorded in old diaries and journals. Excerpts from some of these were published by John Moses and Joseph Kirkland in their 1895 *History of Chicago*. In 1818, fur trader and merchant Gurdon S. Hubbard wrote:

Through the oak woods, I landed, and climbing a tree gazed in admiration on the first prairie I had ever seen. The waving grass, intermingling with a rich profusion of wild flowers, was the most beautiful sight I had ever gazed upon.

In 1820, Indian agent Henry R. Schoolcraft said:

The country around Chicago is the most fertile and beautiful that can be imagined. It consists of an intermixture of woods and prairies, diversified with gentle slopes, sometimes attaining the elevation of hills, and irrigated with a number of clear streams and rivers. . .

The boundaries of Old Edgebrook are entirely natural, provided by the woodland of oak, elm, maple, hickory, and walnut of the Billy Caldwell Forest Preserve. Cottonwood, willow, and a variety of shrubs and wildflowers bank the incline that leads down to the edge of the North Branch of the Chicago River. The picturesque surroundings of Old Edgebrook impart a sense of serenity and sanctuary virtually unknown in any other part of the city.

Old Edgebrook is sited on land that was once home and hunting grounds for the Potawatomi Indians, a tribe thought to have come originally from the Canadian side of Lake Huron. Potawatomi means "People of the Place of Fire" and fire played an impor-

tant part in their rituals. The relationship between the earliest settlers from the East and the Indians was at first moderately amicable but became increasingly adversarial during the early 1800s.

One significant cause was the formation of the Northwest Territory by the United States Congress in 1787 which provided for the formation of new states west of and equal in status to the thirteen original states. Public lands were offered for sale in a vast area that later became the states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, and part of Minnesota. In 1795, the Treaty of Greenville ended twenty years of intermittent warfare between the American government and Indians in western New York State, Pennsylvania, and eastern and southern Ohio. The treaty included a provision that among the land ceded to the government was a small area where the Chicago River meets Lake Michigan. In 1803, Fort Dearborn was established on this site. One of many American forts attacked by Indians during the War of 1812, sometimes with British support but always with the goal of stopping the westward movement of settlement, Fort Dearborn was destroyed but rebuilt four years later. In that same year of 1816, a treaty again ceded more Indian lands along the Chicago River and the portage route to the southwest where construction of the Illinois and Michigan Canal would soon begin, creating a connection between Lake Michigan and the Mississippi. The ceded lands included most of present-day Chicago. The Erie Canal opened in 1825, and with a road from Detroit to Chicago begun the same year, a surge of pioneers began moving west. Some of the Indians still living in the Chicago area reacted with hostility. Finally, after their final defeat in the Black Hawk War of 1832, the remaining Potawatomes signed a treaty which ceded all Indian rights to lands in northern Illinois and adjacent areas of Wisconsin and Indiana. Land west of the Mississippi around Council Bluffs, Iowa, was given to them along with cash and goods.

By 1833, Chicago had attained sufficient size to be incorporated as a town, and in 1836, the last troops left Fort Dearborn. The Potawatomi had made their final visit to Chicago in 1835 to collect their last payment from the government before moving west, although some fled to northern Wisconsin rather than be relocated. Among those moving to Iowa was Billy Caldwell, a chief of the United Nation of Ottawa, Chippewa, and Potawatomi, whose Indian name was Sauganash. Before leaving, he sold the land he had been given in 1828 in recognition of his services as a mediator between the government and the Indians and also as a reward for saving the lives of Indian agent John Kinzie and his family after the massacre at Fort Dearborn in 1812. The government had also given him an annuity and built a house for him near what is now the intersection of State Street and Chicago Avenue. Caldwell's allotment included the present-day Chicago communities of Forest Glen, Sauganash, and Edgebrook. Later, a considerable portion of this land was set aside as Cook County Forest Preserve and today is known as the Billy Caldwell Preserve. Caldwell died in Iowa in 1841 at the age of sixty-two. A remarkable leader by any standards, Billy Caldwell was described by A. T. Andreas in his 1884 *History of Cook County* as:

one of the most conspicuous, as well as one of the most notable characters identified with the history of early Chicago, . . . an Indian half-breed. He

was the son of a Colonel Caldwell, an Irish officer in the British army stationed at Detroit, and was born about the year 1780. His mother was a Pottawatomí [*sic*], and is said to have been remarkable for her beauty and intelligence. Billy received a good education at the Jesuit schools of Detroit and learned to speak and write the French and English languages fluently. He also acquired the knowledge of a number of Indian dialects. . . . In person he was large and commanding, of great strength and power of endurance. At first his Indian name was "Straight Tree," on account of his fine appearance, but he is better known by the name of Sauganash, or the Englishman.

So sterling a character was this Billy Caldwell that one of Chicago's first public houses, the Sauganash Hotel, was named after him. Legend has it that as Mark Beaubien, the proprietor, was constructing his hostelry, Billy Caldwell happened by and reputedly said to him, "I suppose you will name your hotel after some great man as the Americans do." "Yes," Beaubien replied, "I shall name it after a great man. I shall call it the 'Sauganash.'" A white two-story structure with blue shutters, the Sauganash Hotel was reputedly the city's first frame structure. It was in Beaubien's hotel in 1833 that Chicago was incorporated as a town. After the Sauganash burned to the ground, the site was occupied by the Wigwam, a meeting hall where Abraham Lincoln was nominated for the presidency by the 1860 Republican National Convention. This site is located near what is now the intersection of Lake Street and North Wacker Drive.

Edgebrook and Arthur Dixon

In 1894, the land now known as Old Edgebrook was owned by Arthur and Annie Dixon, and it is Arthur Dixon who was most influential in the development of Edgebrook into a choice residential community. Born in County Fermanagh, Ireland on March 27, 1837, Arthur Dixon came to America in 1858, living first in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh and becoming a resident of Chicago in 1861. Initially he operated a retail grocery store but then through what Dixon himself characterized as a fortuitous "accident," he founded the Arthur Dixon Transfer Company, one of the city's first service organizations. As a grocery merchant he one day accepted a horse and truck in payment for a debt. Dixon then hired a driver and began the transfer and handling of goods throughout the downtown section of Chicago. Gradually this grew into a full-fledged and lucrative business with an extensive stable of draft horses and a panoply of various vehicles.

While achieving considerable prominence in the business world, Dixon's more noteworthy contribution came in his active participation in municipal affairs. He served for twenty-one years as an alderman in the City Council and was president of this body from 1874 to 1880. For his vigilance and honesty in the administration of city finance, he earned the title of "Watch Dog of the City Treasury." Particular issues among many which received strong Dixon backing included the creation of a public library, the annexation of the suburbs, and proper fire protection for all parts of the city. Dixon was

considered something of an anomaly in politics for, despite his Scotch-Irish ancestry, he was a Republican, and in 1880 he was a delegate to the Republican National Convention and a member of the City and County Republican Committees. Dixon's philanthropic activities included serving as a trustee for Wesley Hospital and the First Methodist Episcopal Church. The father of fourteen children, Dixon and his family lived at 3131 Michigan Avenue. In addition to his own business, Dixon served as a director of two banks and two railroad companies. Arthur Dixon died in 1917 and is buried at Rosehill Cemetery, not far from Old Edgebrook. The street in the Old Edgebrook District now called Livermore was once named Dixon.

In 1891, Dixon retired from public life and in 1894, he and his wife Annie sold their land to the Title Guaranty and Trust Company for \$200,000. The deed was recorded in the Recorder's Office on December 22, 1894 and authorized the Title Guaranty and Trust Company to improve, manage, operate, protect and subdivide the land. Apparently, Dixon and several other men formed the Dixon Land Association which developed the land originally. The president of this association was Albert J. Earling who at that time was general manager and second vice-president of the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railway. For over forty years he and Arthur Dixon had been close friends and business associates, both serving as directors of the Central Trust Company. Earling was born at Richfield, Wisconsin in 1849 and started with the railroad as a telegrapher at the age of seventeen. Promoted to train dispatcher, he rose through various positions to become president of the railroad in 1899. Because of his hands-on knowledge, he invented an important signal system and according to August Deruth in *The Milwaukee Road* (1948):

He was destined to be one of the most popular of executives for, having risen from the ranks, he kept in touch unfailingly with the men of the Milwaukee, spending many nights in the yards riding switch engines and talking with the men.

It was through this contact with Earling that the Dixon Land Association created Old Edgebrook as a residential community for railroad officials. These first homeowners were also dependent on the railroad for transportation to and from the Loop. In the 1890s, the only alternative was the horse and buggy and this mode of transport certainly wasn't practical for the daily commute. One of the first projects of the Dixon Land Association was the construction in 1896 of a large stone and frame, multi-turreted railroad station with the added amenity of a covered "pavilion" for commuters waiting along the track side. Well-appointed, the station contained washroom facilities, a fireplace in the waiting room, a furnace in the basement, and an apartment on the second floor for the station agent who the deed stipulated must always be on the premises. The advantage of having an agent on the premises meant that tickets could be purchased at the depot and through trains could be flagged down when necessary. It also meant that telegraph and freight services were available. The station was presented to the railroad by the developers and rapidly became an anchor for the community.

The Milwaukee Road

Of all the factors responsible for Chicago's astonishingly rapid expansion during the latter half of the nineteenth century, the railroads were unquestionably one of the most influential. While the railroads transformed commerce and industry, they also had a profound effect on land use patterns as Mayer and Wade explain in *Chicago: Growth of a Metropolis* (1969):

The railroads also played a crucial role in the distribution of settlement outside the city. Almost from the beginning, suburbs appeared like beads on a string along the lines leaving Chicago. Occupied in large part by the well-to-do, [who could afford the relatively expensive train fare,] they depended for their existence on daily commuting service to the city. The railroad station was, symbolically, the center of life of the suburban community, and many were large and even elegant. Spaced miles apart and often quite distant from the municipal boundary, the suburbs were nevertheless a part of the metropolis.

Edgebrook, although technically within the city limits, was for all intents and purposes a commuter suburb. Another example of a suburb where one railroad in particular was instrumental in its colonization is found in Hinsdale. Primarily created by the management of the Burlington Northern Railroad, it was named after H. W. Hinsdale, a member of the railroad's Board of Directors.

What eventually became the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul, and Pacific Railroad was originally chartered in Milwaukee in 1850 to run between Milwaukee and Waukesha, a distance of only 20 miles. Intended to open up new markets for the farmers of Wisconsin, its first name was the Milwaukee and Mississippi Railroad Company. By the 1880s, its headquarters had moved to Chicago and the company transformed from a localized agency of transportation to a vast network of transcontinental rails serving Wisconsin, Illinois, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Upper Michigan, and the Dakotas. Re-incorporated in Illinois in 1872 as the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railway Company, the company added Pacific to its name in 1906 when its service extended all the way to the West Coast. Although no longer in existence, the Milwaukee Road will always be well-remembered in the Midwest for its beautiful and distinctive *Hiawatha* trains. George H. Douglas in *Rail City, USA* (1981) recounts the story of this once-famous train:

Apparently, Indian names had long excited the imagination of Milwaukee executives, for over the years they had on their timecards such train titles as *Arrow*, *Tomahawk*, *Sioux*, and *Chippewa*. The various *Hiawathas* were named from the Mohawk chief immortalized by Longfellow, a legendary Indian character not at all identified with the Milwaukee's territory, but obviously appropriate for his suggestion of swiftness:

*He could shoot an arrow from him,
And run forward with such fleetness
That the arrow fell behind him*

The *Hiawathas*, while they lasted, were as beautiful to look at as they were fleet of foot--a suitable tribute to Longfellow's great hero. They were always elegant trains and were highly visible in the Chicago suburbs, where fans could observe them (wearing their distinctive harvest yellow-orange livery) as they transited suburban towns like Morton Grove, Edgebrook and Deerfield. Here they were perfect examples of streamlined steam-train perfection, smoking up the countryside with a faint reminiscence of the smoke signals and beating drums of the American past.

The Milwaukee Road was equally famous for its other big-name train, the *Pioneer Limited*, one of the oldest and longest lasting in America, which ran straight through from Chicago to the Twin Cities. First put in operation in 1872, it was the first train to carry sleeping cars to the north country and by 1882 carried parlor and dining cars as well. It was the first in the Midwest with the Westinghouse air brake and the first to be steam heated and electrically lighted. Although Amtrak replaced all privately owned passenger service in 1971, commuters are still traveling routes originated by the Milwaukee Road, and this once prestigious line will always be recorded as one of the giants in the annals of railroad history.

The Domestic Architecture of Old Edgebrook

In the post-frontier years, 1890 to 1940, more houses were erected than in the nation's entire previous history. Old Edgebrook presents a microcosm of this unprecedented burst in home construction. This was the individually-owned home on a lawn-fronted lot which was a testament to material progress and an emblem of family integrity. It was the ultimate goal of most Americans, and it existed in a number of types and a virtual profusion of styles. If architectural historians have been able to isolate a relatively few house types, such as the homestead temple-house, the foursquare, and the bungalow, they in many instances are still grappling with a precise nomenclature for the plethora of styles. A sampling of name tags might include Queen Anne, Tudor, and various colonial revival styles of a Spanish, English, French, Dutch or German origin, as well as Craftsman and Prairie. To further complicate matters, substyles within styles can be distinguished although they often overlap. For example, under Spanish Colonial, the substyles of Mission, Mediterranean, and Pueblo can be identified. Subspecies of English Colonial Revival might include the New England Saltbox and the Cape Cod cottage. Until recently, few references or guidebooks were available to help understand the enormous assemblage of common houses built between 1890 and 1940 and which still today make up so much of the familiar built environment. But how was this 1890-1940 house different from the houses that had been built in the previous decades of the nineteenth century? Generally, some very distinct differences can be discerned. Drawing on the heritage of the past, the

Victorians indiscriminately mixed and matched styles with a sometimes reckless abandon. While the post-Victorians were also eclectics, they moved in the direction of greater uniformity with a tendency to use only one eclectic style per building, and that one would be a relatively purer and more correct copy of the original. This was the Academic movement. Another trend, qualified as the Progressive movement, was to simply emphasize in an open and honest way the fundamentals of architecture such as structure and materials. Use of ornament too is very different. The Victorians' pursuit of the eye-catching picturesque resulted in an excess of ornament, a kind of conspicuous consumption of decorative effect. The post-Victorian ornament is, in contrast, judiciously chosen and selectively applied, showing a new restraint and discipline. Overall, the houses that emerged had an unpretentious dignity, pleasing plainness, and sobriety that formed a tasteful counter to the lavish and opulent Victorian house with its busy "gingerbread" trim.

Above all this was a *comfortable* house, a dwelling transformed by science and technology which made standard features of indoor plumbing, gas and electricity, and central heating. Legitimizing, in fact dictating, the use of these modern conveniences were changing artistic philosophies and advanced theories on a suitable middle-class life style. The germ theory of disease, for instance, gained widespread acceptance in the 1880s, causing intense interest in improved sanitary conditions. Hot and cold running water made cleanliness a commonplace and daily ritual out of what was once an onerous chore. The ideal housewife strove for a spotless house. A new practical and unpretentious aesthetic looked askance at the plush furnishings, ornate carvings, heavy draperies, and accumulation of bric-a-brac once considered the acme of taste in the Victorian home. Electric vacuum cleaners and clothes washers were but two of the powerful weapons now fielded to fight dirt. For the housewife, these and other appliances had the added advantage of "allowing muscles of steel and nerves of electric wire do the youth-blighting, age-wearing work," in the words of a contemporary writer. With central heating, rooms no longer had to be closed off in order to retain heat from an individual unit such as the fireplace, hence floor plans became more open. In the kitchen, now referred to as the laboratory of the homemaker, the gas range replaced the wood-burning stove and the icebox superceded the root cellar for cold storage. The specialized zones of the nineteenth-century house such as sewing rooms and servants' quarters were scaled down or eliminated all together. The Victorian parlor, library, and sitting room were amalgamated into one living room. Kitchens now directly adjoined dining rooms. The elaborate and multi-dimensional homes of the 1870s and 1880s were viewed as old-fashioned, inefficient, and unhealthy. House plans and architectural fashion gave way to a new simplicity.

In 1895, the first home went up in Old Edgebrook. 6167 McClellan Avenue was the family home of Grant Williams, an official of the Milwaukee Road Traffic Department. Stylistically, this house is a direct lineal descendant of the Queen Anne house of the 1880s which was distinguished by asymmetrical massing and a rich riot of forms, textures, materials, and colors. A full-fledged Queen Anne house was a highly picturesque, visually exuberant display. In contrast, the Grant Williams House, while retaining the complexities of shape of the Queen Anne style, is noticeably simpler in overall composition. Having seen literally hundreds of houses across the country built in this much more

restrained version of the Queen Anne style, Clem Labine, publisher of *The Old House Journal*, decided it deserved a designation all its own and most aptly has called it "Princess Anne." Writing in the magazine in July, 1982 he said:

The Princess Anne house is fascinating because it embodies the taste of two centuries. Its asymmetrical shape reflects a lingering Victorian romanticism and the love of visual richness. The relatively simple, unornamented surfaces reflect early 20th century taste: the utilitarianism of the Arts & Crafts movement, allied with the chaste restraint of the classically influenced American Renaissance. The passions behind those turn-of-century philosophies have cooled, but the Princess Anne house remains as a tangible reminder of that aesthetic tug-of-war.

The pointed gables, wraparound porch, and multi-sided bell tower of the Grant Williams House are typical features shared by both the Queen Anne and Princess Anne styles. But the plain wood shingle surface treatment and the fact that the applied ornamentation has been restricted only to a triangular panel under the main entrance gable and to a band encircling the bell tower definitely mark this house as Princess Anne. Other houses in variations of the Princess Anne include 6300 North Louise (O. D. Aeppeli, original owner; 1895), 6173 North McClellan (W. M. McEwen, original owner; 1895), 6203 North Lundy (J. B. Cole, original owner; 1895), 6239 North Lundy (Wm. F. Schmidt, original owner; 1896), and 6219 North Lundy (L. W. Johnson, original owner; 1896).

In November, 1895, the second Milwaukee Road family moved into a house located at 6328 North Louise Avenue. William A. Linn was an assistant in the railroad's Purchasing Department. A large, plain, commodious dwelling, the William A. Linn House bespeaks a tradition of homebuilding that can be traced through successive generations of Americans. Its stylistic roots can be found in the straightforward symmetry of the 1700s Georgian Colonial on through to the geometric shapes of the early 1800s Greek Revival. Contemporary architectural historians have come to call this house type the homestead or homestead temple-house, a reference to the pronounced front gable that looks like the pediment of a Greek temple. During the Victorian era, the homestead house was usually built only by farmers because the style-conscious urban home-buyer rejected its strong, simple lines and unadorned surfaces. However, the 1890s and early 1900s saw a complete shift in popular taste. No one any longer saw any sense in evoking romantic fantasies of bygone days in their homes.

The other homestead houses in Old Edgebrook such as 6307 North Louise, (S. P. Dobson, original owner; 1895), 6283 North Louise (E. W. Shaw, original owner; 1896), 6306 North Louise (H. S. Morris, original owner; 1896) and the William A. Linn House are all a common version of the basic homestead temple-house known as the tri-gabled ell. The plan consists of two intersecting rectangles forming an ell. The roof then ends up with three gables, hence the name. Another configuration, such as is found on the William A. Linn House, was to have the porch tucked into the space formed by the two legs of the ell. Although the primary impact of the homestead temple-house comes from shape

and proportion, it is not unusual to find historical elements added here and there for a touch of stylishness. A Palladian window, for instance, found at 6307 North Louise, suggests Colonial restraint and elegance. The framing of the screen door at 6328 North Meredith, the turned balusters of the porch at 6307 North Louise, and the barge boards and collar brace of the roof gable at 6283 North Louise are all forms of decorative accent known as Eastlake. This sturdy, geometric style of ornamentation was named after Charles Locke Eastlake (1833-1906), an English interior decorator who tried to wean public taste away from the roses and ribbons of Victoriana and return it to the robust simplicity and forthright construction Eastlake believed characteristic of medieval times. Eastlake's principles became enormously influential in America with the publication of his book *Hints on Household Taste* in 1868. This practical and popular guidebook went through four English and six American editions, and Eastlake's dictates on design, although imprecisely followed and somewhat diluted by American manufacturers, lasted well into the 1890s.

One of the most perennially fashionable American house styles is the Tudor. First brought to the United States by the English settlers, Tudor enjoyed enormous popularity around the turn-of-the-century, was again the rage during the 1920s and 1930s, and aspects of its detailing can be seen on the eclectic houses being built even today. Deriving its name from the Tudor monarchs of Great Britain, Henry VIII and Elizabeth I, whose reigns broadly covered the sixteenth century, the hallmark of the Tudor style is the distinctive wall pattern resulting from half-timbered construction. Here the actual timberwork of the building is left exposed to view and the spaces between the timbers filled or "nogged" with brick work often covered with stucco. Other distinguishing features of a Tudor-styled house were large, elaborate chimneys, prominent gables, and leaded glass windows. In Old Edgebrook, the house at 6223 North Lundy Avenue (A. Nelson, original owner), designed in 1914 by E. O. Blake, is an archetypical example of this style.

Closely akin but on a more modest scale is another style of English derivation known as the Cotswold Cottage which is exemplified in Old Edgebrook by 6282 North Louise (John A. Johnson, original owner; 1923) and 6230 North Livermore (Dr. Ross Van Pelt, original owner; H. H. Bentley, architect; 1936). Identifying design elements are a roof made of real or simulated thatch and at least one steeply sloping eave. Mary Mix Foley in *The American House* (1980) says that the Cotswold Cottage:

offered the charm of a small Tudor dwelling as seen through a golden haze. . . . Though consciously quaint, these were appealing houses with their informally grouped masses and broad sheltering roofs.

The name "Cotswold Cottage" was popularized by Henry Ford who in 1915 brought to Greenfield Village, the outdoor museum of historic buildings he was creating in Michigan, an exact replica of this English country house type.

Of all the revival styles, the English Colonial struck the most responsive chord in Americans. Remaining consistently in vogue, this mode was, and is, ubiquitous in suburban development. In Old Edgebrook, 6220 North Mandell (John A. Johnson, original

owner; 1921), 6270 North Louise (Gordon G. Fee, original owner; 1924), 6280 North Louise (Emma Setterburg, original owner; 1924), 6311 North Louise (Milton M. Pollack, original owner; H. N. Peterson, architect; 1932), and 6316 North Louise (John R. Bryant, original owner; B. H. Jillson, architect; 1937) all epitomize this architectural idiom. Appealing because it was considered "native" to America, it was reflective of the country's high-thinking, hardworking Yankee heritage. A sense of cultural roots was important to Americans and the Colonial Revival created and conveyed an immediate and familiar image of cherished values established by the Founding Fathers. Models for the English Colonial ran the gamut from the pastoral New England farmhouse, such as idyllically depicted in Currier and Ives prints, to the more formal, sophisticated Georgian mansion, such as built by wealthy Atlantic seaboard merchants at the end of the eighteenth century.

Compositionally, the Colonial Revival house is a solidly grounded rectangle or oblong formally arranged into a pattern of balanced parts. Pronounced symmetry is always a hallmark. Marked attention is given to the centered entrance. 6270 and 6316 North Louise both feature a panelled door; the former flanked by classical columns; the latter by sidelights and cameo (oval) windows. Each doorway is surmounted by a lunette window. Also standard in the Colonial Revival vocabulary are multi-pane windows bounded by shutters which are found on several of the Old Edgebrook houses. The Colonial Revival movement, which was first sparked by the Philadelphia Centennial of 1876, originally freely interpreted colonial precedents. During the first decades of the twentieth century, however, fashion changed towards more authentic and more carefully researched copies with a better understanding of the prototypes. The houses of Old Edgebrook, all of the 1920s and 1930s vintage, are of this caliber.

Coexistent with the house that personified traditional, academic principles was the house built in the Prairie and Craftsman Bungalow styles which crystallized the progressive, more unconventional and less orthodox train of thought. While ostensibly divorced from Old World models, the bungalow actually derived from a civilization far older than Western Europe, that of India. The name bungalow is a corruption of the Hindustani word *bangala*, signifying typical native dwelling. As a respectable house form, it was transported to the English-speaking world by the British Raj around 1880. By the early twentieth century, the term was universally applied to almost any kind of informal and unostentatious house characterized by a low sloping roof, wide eaves, of no more than one or one-and-a-half-stories, and most commonly defined by a porch or verandah. Bungalows were built in many different configurations from coast to coast, manifesting elements from the entire repertoire of timber construction such as the Swiss chalet, the Japanese pagoda, the Spanish hacienda, and the American log cabin.

The bungalow remained the dominant form for small houses built during the period 1905 until the early 1920s. However, the leading and most pervasive influence on its styling was the Craftsman work of two California brothers, Charles Sumner and Henry Mather Greene, who practiced together in Pasadena from 1893 to 1914. In the hands of these two skilled designers, the bungalow was brought to its most elegant and sophisti-

cated conclusion as William H. Jordy describes in *American Buildings and Their Architects* (1984):

In a wood-building country no houses display craftsmanship in wood superior to the best of Charles Sumner and Henry Mather Greene. The quality is that of fine cabinetmaking given architectural scale and meaning.

While the Greene brothers were only attempting to perfect a dwelling type especially suited to the benign climate and integrated with the spacious terrain of southern California, their pioneering ideas received extensive coverage in publications such as *Western Architect*, *House Beautiful*, *Architectural Record*, and *Ladies' Home Journal*. Through vehicles such as these, the rest of the nation was quickly familiarized with the Craftsman Bungalow style.

An equally instrumental magazine was the *Craftsman*, published monthly from 1901 to 1916 by Gustav Stickley, considered father of the American Arts and Crafts movement. Stickley advocated a back-to-basics philosophy which abhorred clutter and luxury. He passionately believed that a house should be honest in freely and frankly expressing its form and materials. He extolled the virtues of a home environment that was natural, straightforward, and unselfconscious, believing that these features would produce moral rectitude and upright character.

In Old Edgebrook, 6201 North McClellan Avenue (Joseph P. Immel, original owner), built in 1921 and designed by B. J. Hatton, displays some of the more frequent elaborations of the Craftsman Bungalow. Particularly noticeable are the junctions where the roof joins the wall. The roof has a wide eave overhang; along the horizontal edge the actual rafter tails are left exposed. Also common is the gabled dormer with exposed rafter ends and triangular knee braces such as are found at the main roof-wall junction. Bands of three or more transomed windows were a typical occurrence as is the added stickwork as extra embellishment. At 6298 North Louise Avenue (N. D. Soderstrom, original owner), built in 1921, the partial-width porch with its roof supported by square columns is another Craftsman Bungalow variant.

The Prairie style was an indigenous architecture, taking its cue from the long, low lines of the flat Midwestern plains. In the hands of its acknowledged master, Frank Lloyd Wright, it was truly innovative and original. Its hallmarks, use of natural materials, precise angular forms, continuous horizontals punctuated by short verticals, and a sense that the building belongs to the landscape were widely and credibly translated into vernacular versions, such as 6240 North Livermore (Dr. A. M. Denton, original owner; H. W. Gugel, architect; 1925). This subtype is sometimes called the Prairie Box or American Four-square and is a simple square or rectangular plan with a low-pitched hipped roof. A favorite formula for the smaller, architect-designed Prairie house is the inconspicuous side entrance and facades dominated by horizontal rows of casement windows having sharply defined vertical framing. Many show Mission-derived tiled roofs. The Prairie style was contemporaneous with the Craftsman Bungalow and reflected a similar character-shaping

impulse. The ranch house and split-levels of today are direct descendants of these two Progressive styles.

Of the architects who received commissions in Old Edgebrook, by far the best known is Clarence Hatzfeld. 6227 North Meredith Avenue (Mrs. A. E. Wilson, original owner; 1921) and 6240 North Lundy Avenue (N. H. Hill, original owner; 1924) are examples of his work. Born in 1873 and educated in Chicago, Hatzfeld trained as an architect under the aegis of Julius Huber, a prominent businessman/architect. In 1895, he joined the Chicago Architectural Club which brought him into contact with Dwight Perkins with whom he later shared office space and whose Prairie school design orientation is evident in some of Hatzfeld's own work. Among Hatzfeld's most well-regarded and creditable work are the houses he designed for the Villa District (designated a Chicago Landmark on November 23, 1983). He also was responsible for fieldhouses for many of the small parks on the city's Far North Side, all built in the 1920s. Clarence Hatzfeld died on August 25, 1943 in Washington D. C. where he had been working as a Recreational Technician for the Federal Works Administration. He was a longtime member of the Illinois Society of Architects.

Clarence Hatzfeld's Old Edgebrook houses do not readily fit into any one stylistic category. The same can be said for 6319 North Louise (Otto Wittbold, original owner; Perry & Thomas, architects; 1916) 6246 North Livermore (C. Anderson, original owner; M. L. Cable, architect; 1921), 6185 North McClellan (Fred Hall, original owner; 1935), and 6200 North Meredith (J. A. King, original owner; J. G. Steinbach, architect; 1938). But this lack of precise stylistic identification is what makes these houses so especially American--the homeowner's unfettered freedom to choose to follow completely tried-and-true lines and echo the past or to be new and radical and express modern sensibilities. Better yet, the house could be an amalgamation or composite of whatever personal taste dictated. An architect could design it or a contractor could be told what was wanted. An equally feasible option was to order by mail through a catalogue such as Sears Roebuck and Company. That made it singularly American too because a single-family house was available to almost every economic stratum of society. Finding a few such stylistic orphans in any suburban development is not extraordinary, and houses such as these make the tradition of domestic building in the United States from 1890 to 1940 such a compelling subject for further exploration.

For Americans living in the half century before World War II, the suburbs were hardly synonymous with conformity, mediocrity, or architecture of questionable taste. Suburbs viewed as a degraded form of city planning is a contemporary view only now being turned around, as Robert A. M. Stern editorializes in "The Anglo-American Suburb," published in *Architectural Design* in October, 1981:

Despite its seminal importance as a representation of our culture's traditions and aspirations, the suburb has been largely spurned by Modernist architects, theorists and historians who have preferred to concentrate on the development of new dwelling types for the "brave new world" they

promoted. Since that time, we have experienced the exuberant 'counter-cultural revolution' of the 1960s and the more lackadaisical cooling-off period of the 1970s, until now, in the 1980s, many of the traditional values of our society have become acceptable again.

An historic district such as Old Edgebrook provides a wide variety of visual clues to what shaped American cultural identity during the transition from the Victorian to the modern world, reviving apt and appropriate images which speak of the value of country life, family stability, and pride of ownership. Old Edgebrook portrays an age, 1890 to 1940, important in American architectural history and presents a new arena for serious scholarship and study. In *The Comfortable House* Alan Gowans summarizes:

No country in the history of the world ever proclaimed that *all* its citizens had a right to comfortable housing--not just housing, but a comfortable home. No other country ever proclaimed that all its citizens had a right to homes of their own if they wanted one. An age which came to close to realizing such goals must be counted as a major chapter in the history of architecture, not just in the United States, but in the world.

As a part of a rich and diverse architectural heritage, early suburban developments like Old Edgebrook deserve more widespread recognition. More especially for Chicago, Old Edgebrook is a fulfillment of the city's motto, "Urbs in Horto," meaning city in a garden.

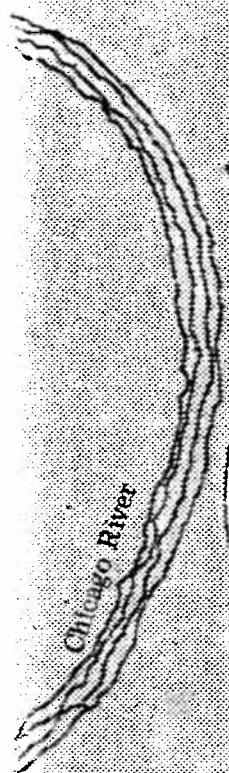


N. Caldwell

W. Devon Avenue

FOREST PRESERVE

N. Lehigh Avenue



Chicago River

N. Mandell

N. Louise Avenue

N. Meredith Avenue

N. McClellan

N. Lundy Avenue

N. Livermore Avenue

N. Prescott Avenue

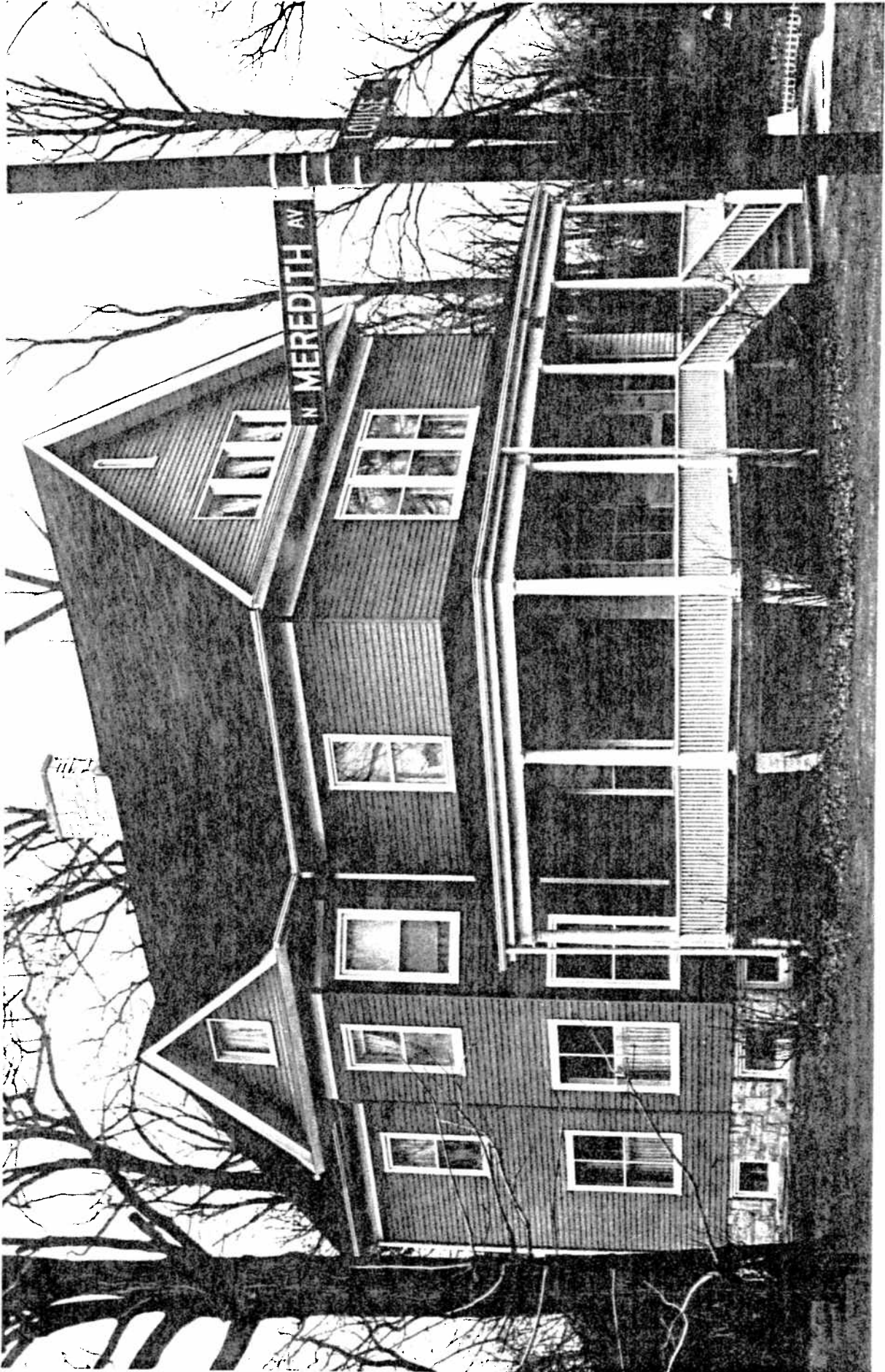
N. Central Avenue

EDGEBROOK GOLF COURSE

old edgebrook district



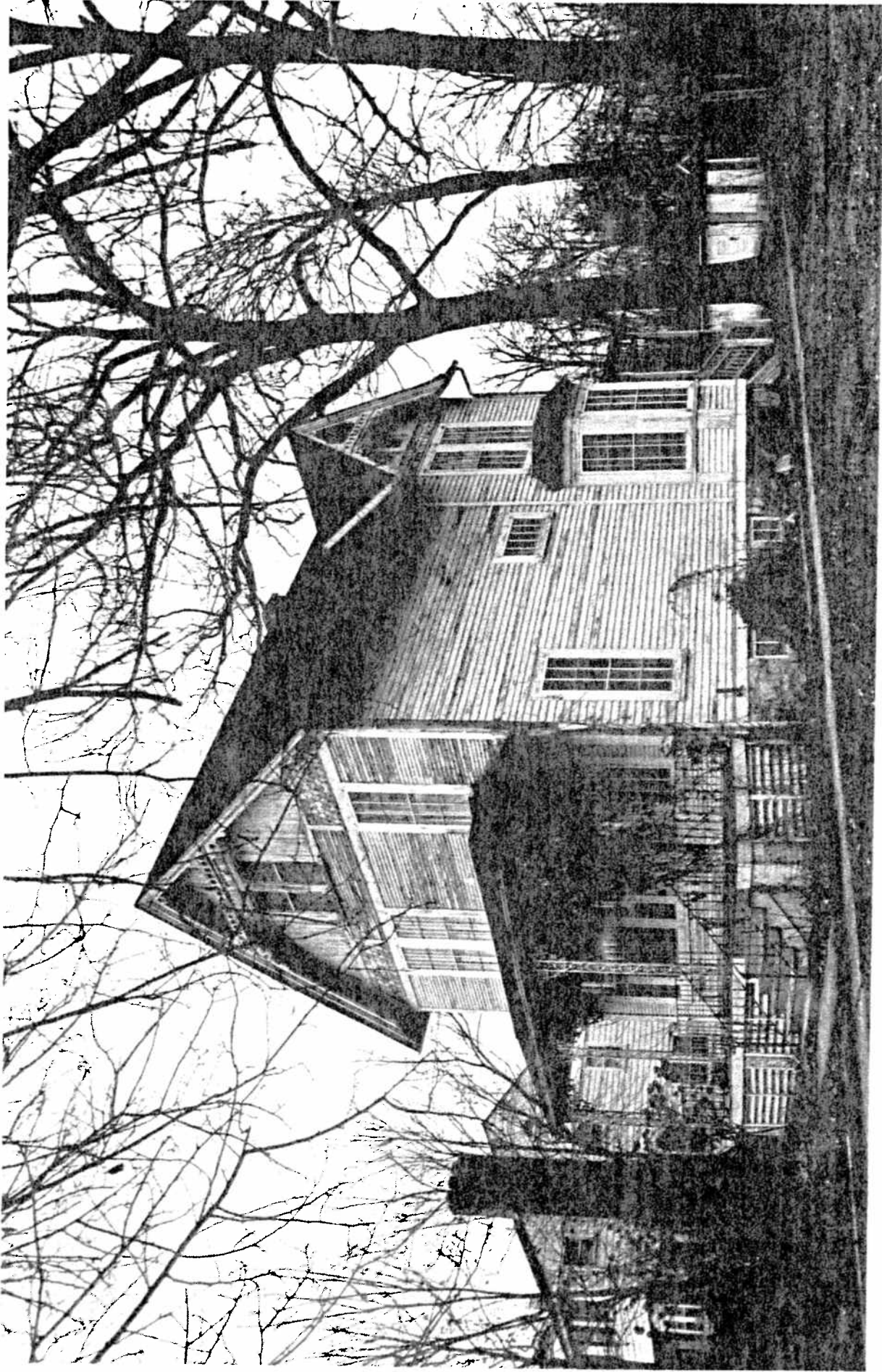
6167 North McClellan, built in 1895, was the family home of Grant Williams and the first house in Old Edgebrook. This and five other houses built in the 1890s are all examples of a much more restrained version of the Queen Anne style which *The Old House Journal* calls the Princess Anne style. (Bob Begolka, photographer)



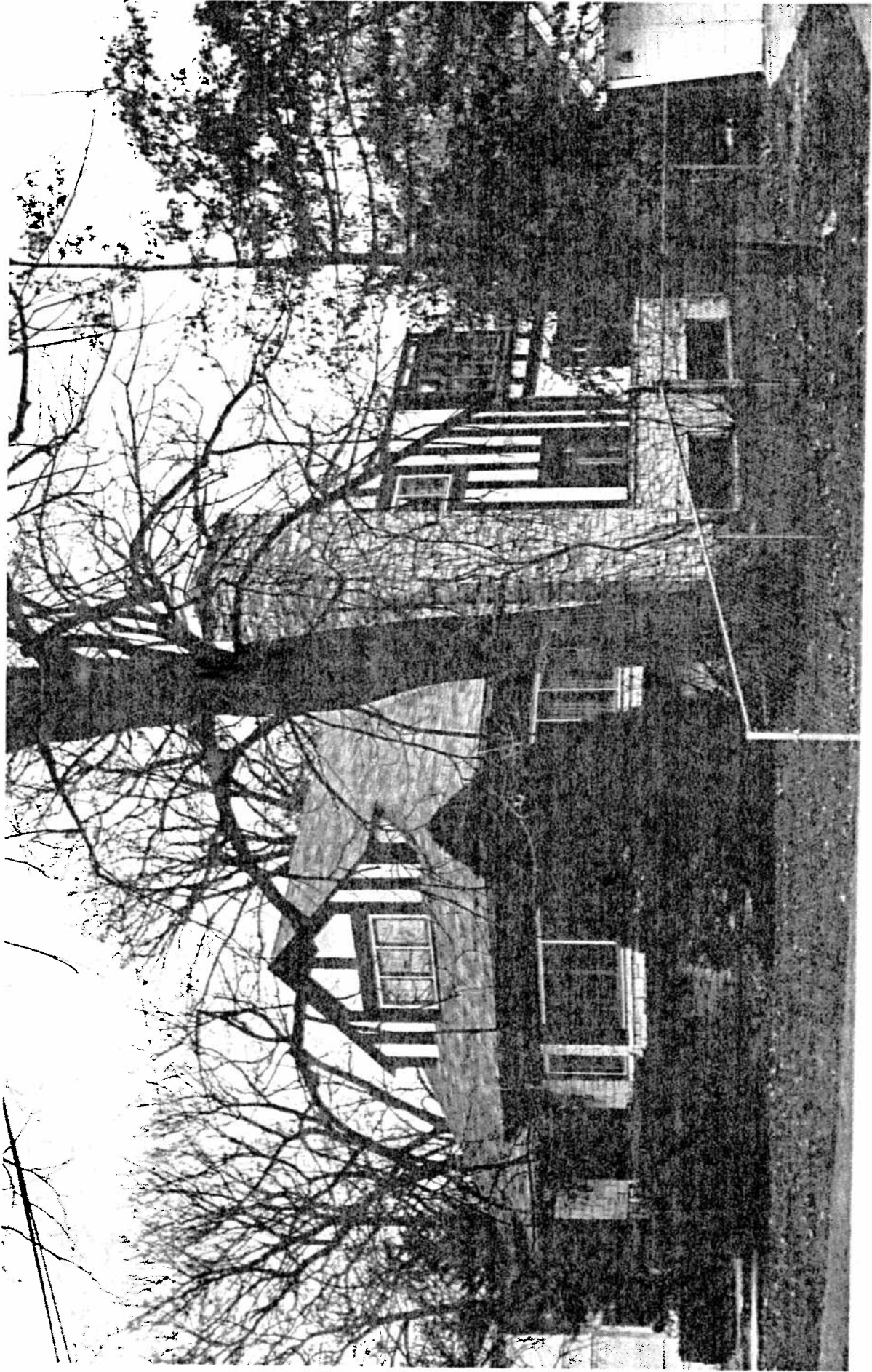
The William A. Linn House, built in 1895 and located at 6328 North Louise Avenue, is a common configuration of the homestead temple-house, known as the tri-gabled ell. The pronounced front gable looks like the pediment of a Greek temple. (Bob Begolka, photographer)



Although the primary impact of the homestead temple-house comes from shape and proportion, it was not unusual to find historical motifs added for a touch of stylishness, such as the Palladian window found at 6307 North Louise. The turned balusters of the porch are Eastlake. (Bob Begolka, photographer)



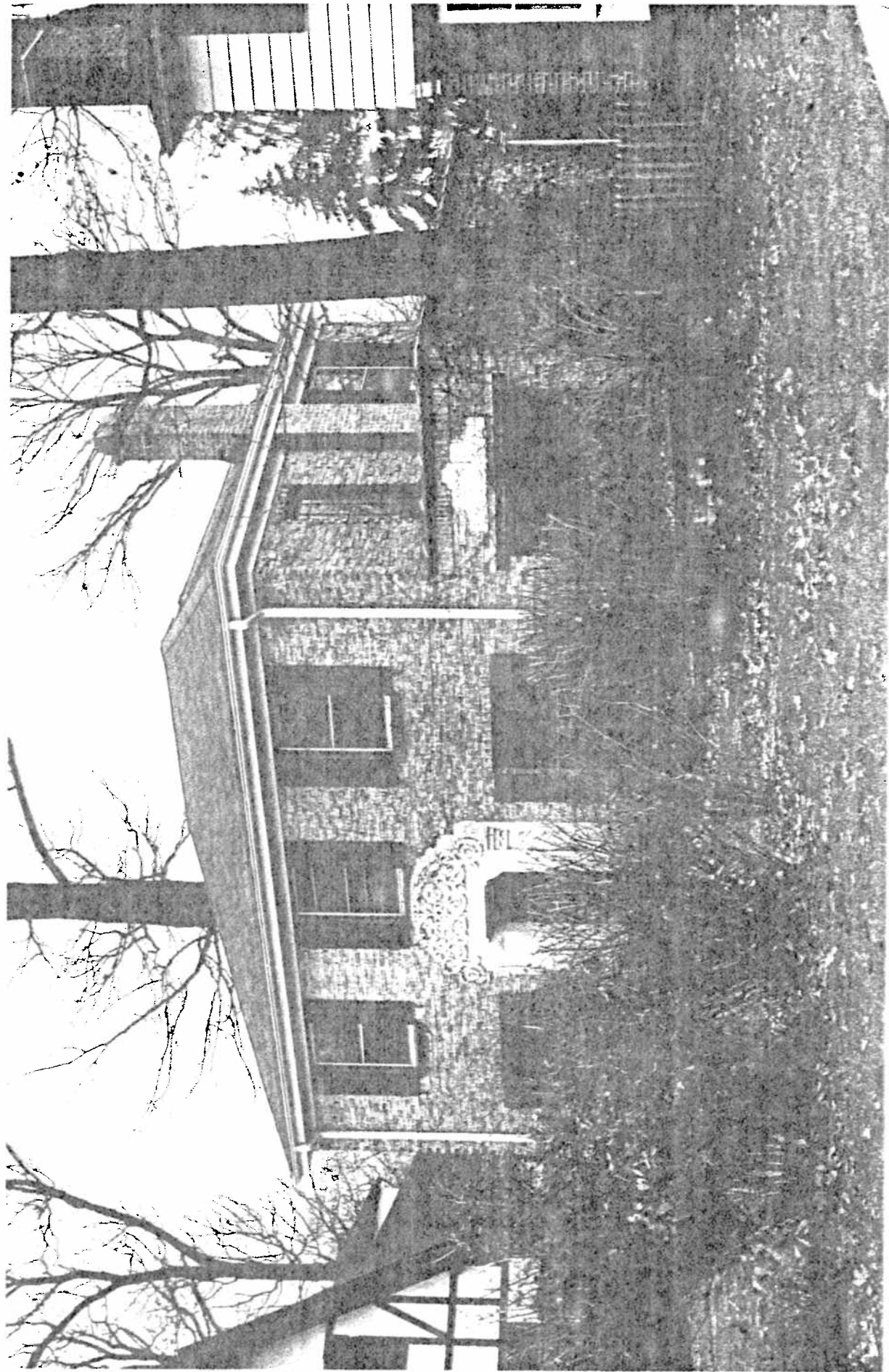
The barge boards and collar brace of the roof gables at 6283 North Louise, built in 1896, are accented with a form of decoration known as Eastlake. This sturdy, simple, geometric ornamentation was a reaction against the florid, rococo embellishments popular in the High Victorian houses of the 1870s and 1880s. (Bob Begolka, photographer)



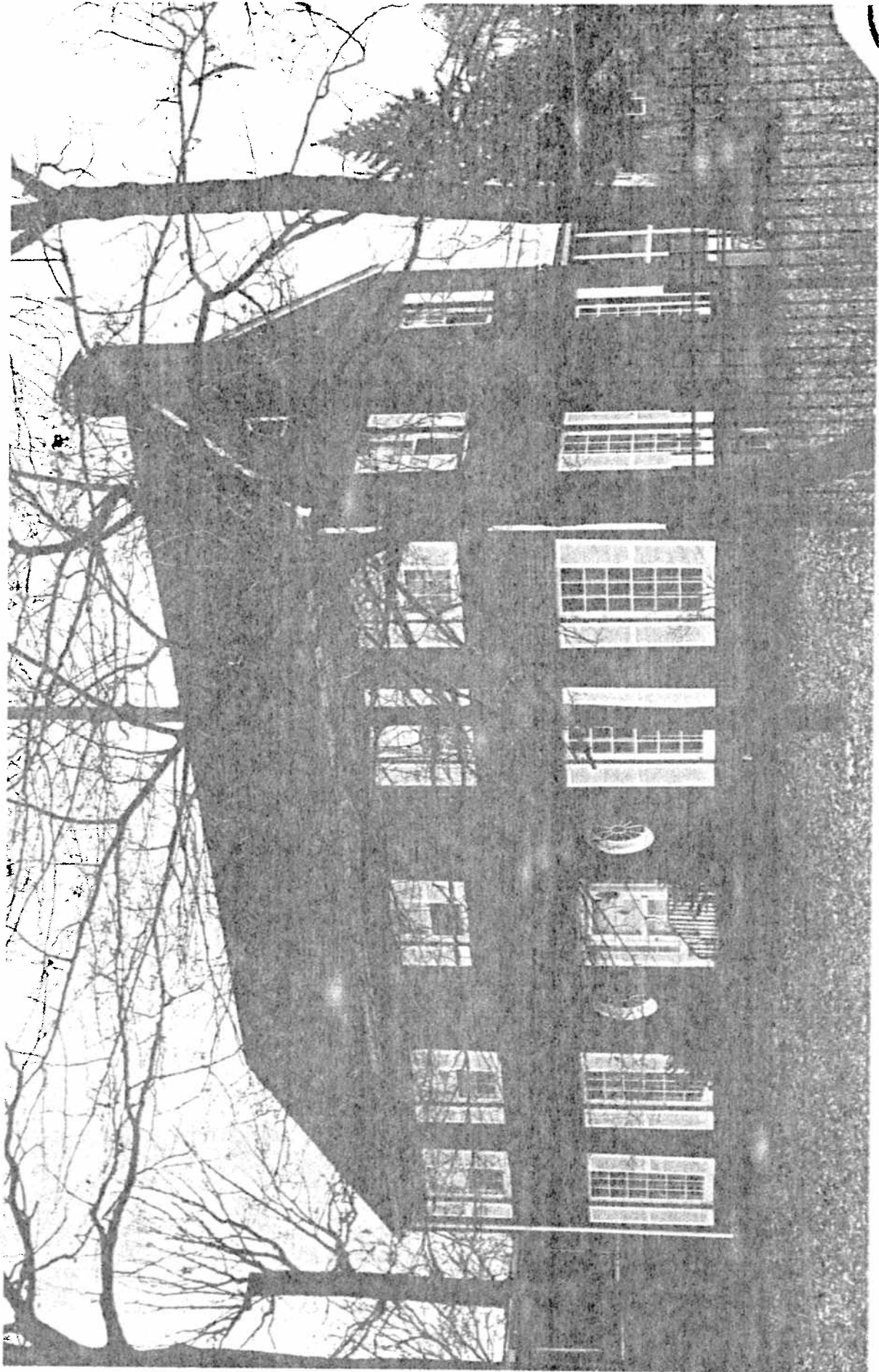
One of the most perennially fashionable American house styles is the Tudor whose hallmark is the distinctive light and dark pattern resulting from either real or simulated half-timbering construction. 6223 North Lundy also displays the other distinguishing features of this style--large elaborate chimneys, prominent gables, and leaded glass windows. (*Bob Begolka, photographer*)



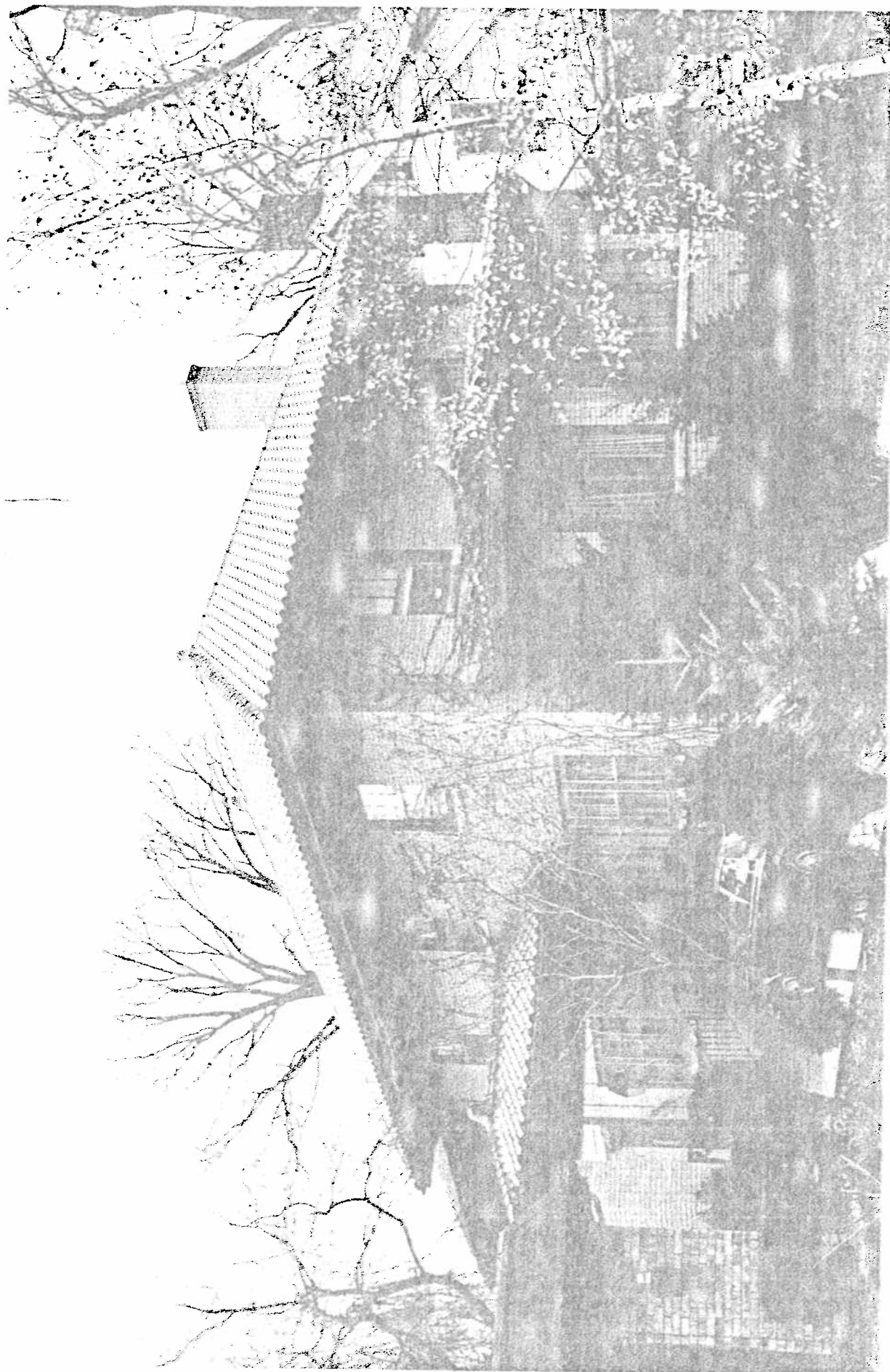
6282 North Louise illustrates the English Country House or Cotswold Cottage style. Closely akin to the Tudor but on a more modest scale, the Cotswold Cottage always had at least one steeply sloping eave. (Bob Begolka, photographer)



Most unusual on this English Colonial Revival house at 6280 North Louise, built in 1924, is the Spanish Colonial treatment of the door surround, richly ornamented with churrigueresque style carved, low-relief decoration. (*Bob Begolka, photographer*)



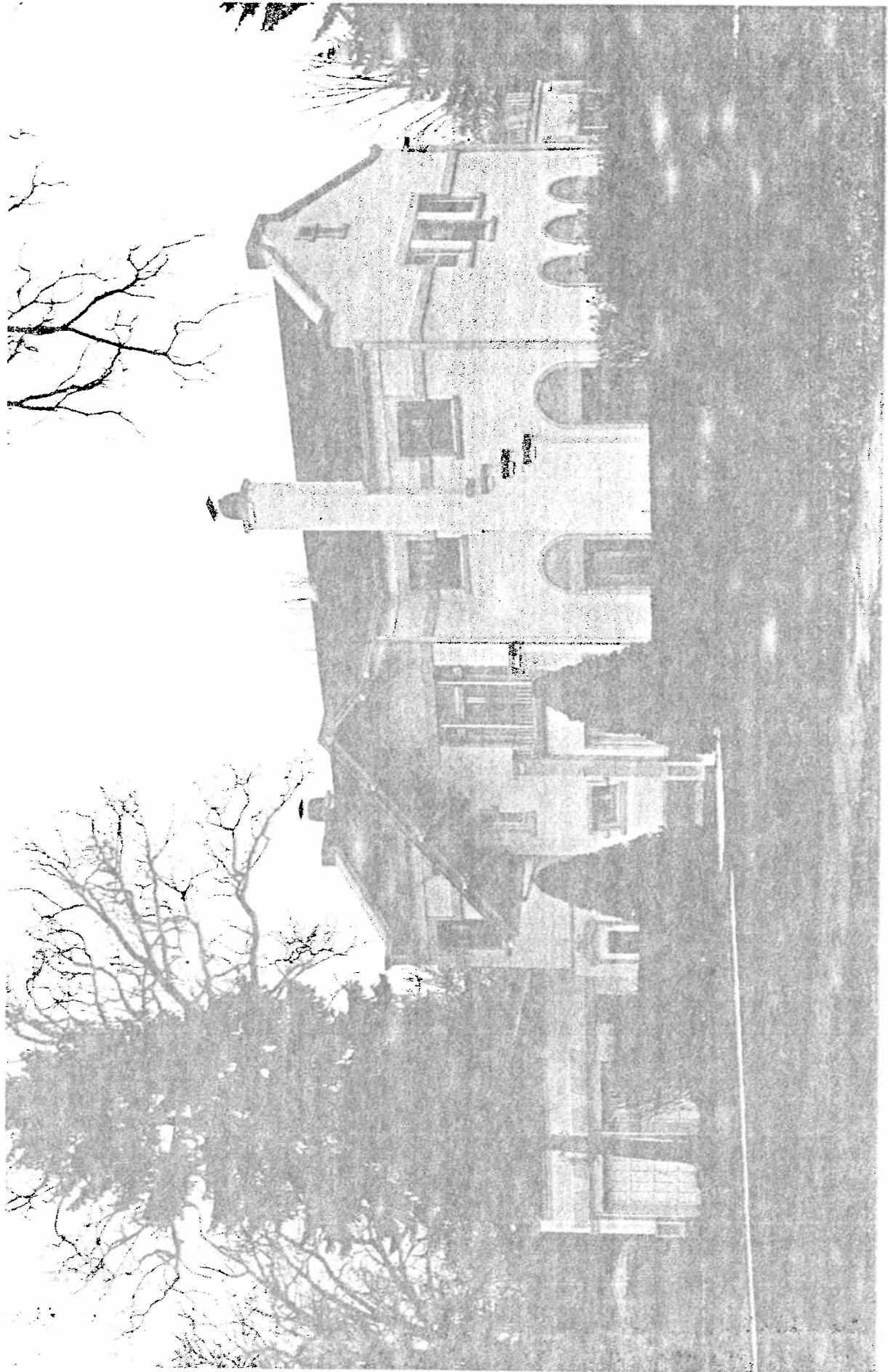
The English Colonial Revival style, exemplified by 6316 North Louise, built in 1937, enjoyed great popularity in suburban developments. Other revival styles found in the United States include Spanish, Dutch, German, and French. (Bob Begolka, photographer)



Frank Lloyd Wright's innovative Prairie style reflected the long, horizontal lines of the Midwestern landscape. 6240 North Livermore, built in 1925, is a vernacular version of the Prairie style, sometimes called the Prairie Box or American Foursquare. (Bob Begolka, photographer)



6201 North McClellan, built in 1921, displays the simplicity and unpretentiousness that are hallmarks of the Craftsman Bungalow style. The ranch houses and split levels of today are direct descendants of this house. (Bob Begolka, photographer)



6227 North Meredith, built in 1921, typifies the carefully crafted and well-proportioned domestic designs of Clarence Hatzfeld, the best known of the architects who received commissions in Old Edgewater between 1896 and 1940. (Peb Rogolka, photographer)



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